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RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RUEAHLG/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/07/2016

TAGS: [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: SHELL DUTCH CONTRACTOR SEIZED IN BAYELSA STATE;  
TRANSOCEAN SUCCESSFULLY EVACUATES MOST RIG EMPLOYEES

REF: LAGOS 936

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reasons 1.4 (D & E)

¶1. (C) Security contacts at Shell confirmed armed local residents today kidnapped a Dutch national from Shell's Gbaran gas gathering plant, Bayelsa State, located near the state capital Yenegoa. The hostage is an employee of Shell contractor Westminster Dredging, a U.K.-based company. As yet, we have no further information on the hostage's identity or welfare. The Dutch Embassy is aware of the incident.

¶2. (C) British Deputy High Commissioner Waterworth told us the incident appears to be a local issue, as villagers in the area have recently complained about their relationship with Nigerian construction firm Julius Berger, which apparently also does work in the area for Shell. Reportedly, Berger ignored the community's complaints, and the community responded by taking the hostage, perhaps mistaking him for a Berger employee.

¶3. (C) Regarding yesterday's incident with an offshore oil rig near Bayelsa State (reftel), Transocean management told us 79 personnel were evacuated by helicopter yesterday from the Trident 8 rig. Nine workers, including eight Nigerian and one Dutch employee, remain on the rig for essential operations. Transocean stated their client, Conoil, has entered negotiations with the Sangana community, which carried out the July 3 operation; Sangana residents have complained Conoil failed to properly implement their Memorandum of Understanding. Transocean management stated the situation at the rig today was calm.

¶4. (C) Transocean confirmed during the initial invasion, community members briefly seized control of a 50-man Naval vessel guarding the Trident 8 rig. Nigerian Navy sources state the community is holding hostage one Nigerian civilian Naval employee, and also captured four AK-47s during the operation. Local press incorrectly reported four sailors were kidnapped.

BROWNE